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Report of the Secretary-General on the United Nations Disengagement Observer Force

(for the period from 10 June 2005 to 9 December 2005)

I. Introduction

1. The present report gives an account of the activities of the United Nations Disengagement Observer Force (UNDOF) during the last six months pursuant to the mandate contained in Security Council resolution 350 (1974) of 31 May 1974 and extended in subsequent resolutions, most recently resolution 1605 (2005) of 17 June 2005.

II. Situation in the area and activities of the Force

2. During the period under review, the ceasefire in the Israel-Syria sector was maintained and the area of operations of UNDOF remained generally quiet, except in the Shab'a farms area (Area 6), which experienced activity originating from the area of operation of the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL), described in my reports on UNIFIL.

3. UNDOF supervised the area of separation by means of fixed positions and patrols to ensure that military forces of either party were excluded from it. The Force also carried out fortnightly inspections of equipment and force levels in the areas of limitation. Liaison officers from the party concerned accompanied the inspection teams. As in the past, both sides denied inspection teams access to some of their positions and imposed some restrictions on the Force's freedom of movement. In addition, Israeli national customs officials continued to operate at the Israel Defense Forces post at the UNDOF crossing gate between the Israeli-occupied Golan and the Syrian Arab Republic.

4. The Force continued to assist the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) with the passage of persons through the area of separation. During the last six months, UNDOF assisted in the crossing of 480 students and 488 religious pilgrims and provided protection at one wedding. UNDOF also supervised the handover of a Syrian boy who had crossed the ceasefire line. Within the means available, medical treatment was provided to the local population on request.

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5. In the area of operation, especially in the area of separation, mines continued to pose a threat to UNDOF personnel and local inhabitants. Owing to the age of the mines and their deteriorating explosives, this threat has increased. UNDOF continued to carry out operational mine clearance. Upon the request of the Government of the Syrian Arab Republic, UNDOF supervised mine clearance work carried out by a civilian Syrian mine clearance company in two villages in the area of separation. UNDOF remained available to support the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) in activities to promote mine awareness among the civilian population.

6. The Force Commander and his staff maintained close contact with the military authorities of Israel and the Syrian Arab Republic. Both sides generally cooperated with the Force in the execution of its tasks.

7. As at 5 December 2005, UNDOF was comprised of 1,047 troops from Austria (380), Canada (185), Japan (30), Nepal (2), Poland (355) and Slovakia (95). A total of 19 National Support Elements were employed by Canada (4) and Japan (15). In addition, 79 military observers of the United Nations Truce Supervision Organization (UNTSO) assisted the Force in carrying out its tasks. All major components of the three-year programme to modernize UNDOF facilities are in the closing stages. A map showing the deployment of the Force is attached to the present report.

III. Financial aspects

8. By its resolution 59/306, the General Assembly appropriated the amount of $41.5 million, equivalent to $3.5 million per month, for the maintenance of the Force for the period from 1 July 2005 to 30 June 2006. Should the Security Council decide to extend the mandate of the Force beyond 31 December 2005, as recommended in paragraph 13 below, the cost of maintaining the Force will be limited to the amounts approved by the Assembly.

9. As at 28 November 2005, unpaid assessed contributions to the UNDOF special account for the period from the inception of the Force to 31 October 2005 amounted to $22.7 million. Total outstanding assessed contributions for all peacekeeping operations as at the same date amounted to $2,217 million.

IV. Implementation of Security Council resolution 338 (1973)

10. The Security Council, while deciding in its resolution 1605 (2005) to renew the mandate of UNDOF for a further period of six months, until 31 December 2005, also called upon the parties concerned to implement immediately resolution 338 (1973) and requested the Secretary-General to submit, at the end of the period, a report on developments in the situation and the measures taken to implement that resolution. The search for a peaceful settlement in the Middle East and, in particular, the efforts undertaken at various levels to implement resolution 338 (1973) were dealt with in the report of the Secretary-General on the situation in the Middle East (A/60/258), submitted pursuant to General Assembly resolutions 59/32 and 59/33.

V. Observations

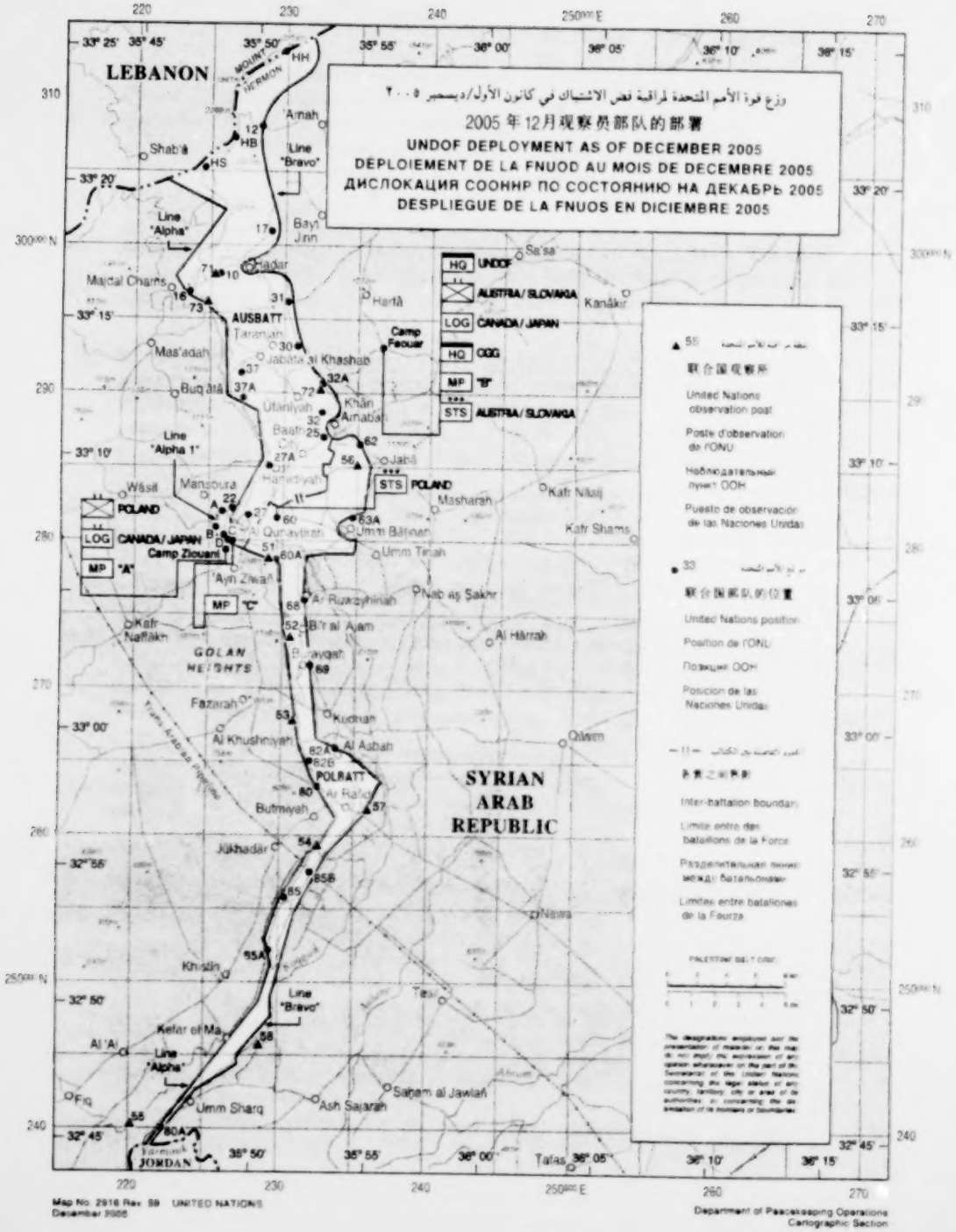
11. The situation in the Israel-Syria sector has remained generally quiet. UNDOF, which was established in May 1974 to supervise the ceasefire called for by the Security Council and the agreement on disengagement between Syrian and Israeli forces of 31 May 1974, has continued to perform its function effectively, with the cooperation of the parties.

12. Nevertheless, the situation in the Middle East is very tense and is likely to remain so, unless and until a comprehensive settlement covering all aspects of the Middle East problem can be reached. I hope that determined efforts will be made by all concerned to tackle the problem in all its aspects with a view to arriving at a just an durable peace settlement, as called for by the Security Council in its resolution 338 (1973).

13. Under the prevailing circumstances, I consider the continued presence of UNDOF in the area to be essential. I therefore recommend that the Security Council extend the mandate of the Force for a further period of six months, until 30 June 2006. The Government of the Syrian Arab Republic has given its assent to the proposed extension. The Government of Israel has also expressed its agreement.

14. In making this recommendation, I must draw attention to the shortfall in the funding of the Force. At present, unpaid assessments amount to some $22.7 million. The sum represents money owed to the Member States that contribute the troops who make up the Force. I appeal to all Member States to pay their assessments promptly and in full and to clear all remaining arrears.

15. In conclusion, I wish to pay tribute to Lieutenant General Bala Nanda Sharma and to the men and women serving with UNDOF. They have performed with efficiency and devotion to duty the important tasks assigned to them by the Security Council. I take this opportunity to express my appreciation to the Governments contributing troops to UNDOF and to those that provide the UNTSO military observers assigned to the Force.



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Letter dated 8 December 2005 from the Secretary-General addressed to the President of the Security Council

I have the honour to refer to the decision of the Peace and Security Council of the African Union adopted at its 40th meeting held in Addis Ababa on 6 October 2005, and to Security Council resolution 1633 (2005) of 21 October 2005, under which an International Working Group was created to assist the Government of Côte d'Ivoire in the implementation of its programme and to consolidate and strengthen existing follow-up mechanisms.

Please find attached the communiqué issued by the International Working Group following its second meeting, held in Abidjan on 6 December 2005 (see annex).

I should be grateful if you would bring this communiqué to the attention of the members of the Security Council.

(*Signed*) Kofi A. **Annan**

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Annex

[Original: French]

International Working Group — second meeting, 6 December 2005

Final communiqué

1. The ministerial International Working Group on Côte d'Ivoire held its second meeting on 6 December 2005 in Abidjan.

2. It should be recalled that following the first meeting of the Group, held on 8 November 2005, the United Nations Security Council, in a presidential statement dated 30 November 2005, expressed its full support to the Group and its work.

3. This second meeting was co-chaired by H.E. Mr. Oluyemi Adeniji, Foreign Minister of Nigeria, and H.E. Mr. Pierre Schori, Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Côte d'Ivoire, in the presence of ministers from the Niger, South Africa and France, the High Representative of the United Nations for the elections and representatives of Benin, Ghana, Guinea, the United Kingdom, the United States, the United Nations, the African Union, the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), the European Union, the International organization of the Francophonie and the World Bank.

4. The Group expresses its gratitude to the current chairman of the African Union, the President of the Economic Community of West African States and the African Union Mediator for the designation of H.E. Mr. Charles Konan Banny as Prime Minister of the transitional period. The new Prime Minister took part in the opening of this meeting of the Group.

5. While congratulating Mr. Konan Banny on his nomination, the Group assured him of its full support. In this regard, the Working Group invites the Mediation Group to verify and report to the Working Group that the Prime Minister holds all powers and all resources described in paragraph 8 of Security Council resolution 1633 (2005) and reaffirmed in the Security Council's presidential statement of 30 November 2005.

6. The mandate of the National Assembly will expire on 16 December 2005. Pending the result of the consultations of the Ivorian parties foreseen in paragraph 11 of resolution 1633 (2005), should it become necessary to enact legislation in order to ensure the efficient and expeditious implementation of the programme of the Government during the transitional period arising from resolution 1633 (2005), the Government, in Council of Ministers, will rapidly adopt decisions, which the Prime Minister will then present within two days to the Head of State, who must sign them within a maximum of five days.

7. Considering that the Independent Electoral Commission is not yet operational, the Group deplores the delay in the electoral process and underlines the consequent risk that elections will not be organized within the stipulated time frame. The Group gives its full support to the High Representative on the consultations he initiated to allow the Commission to function without delay as well as, if necessary, to use arbitration powers with regard to the constitution of the bureau, in accordance with

resolutions 1603 (2005) and 1633 (2005) and the statement of the President of the Security Council of 30 November 2005. The Group reiterates the availability of the Mediation Group to provide all the necessary support to the High Representative for the elections.

8. The Group notes that the Security Council has, on 30 November, reiterated its readiness, in close consultation with the Mediation of the African Union, to impose individual measures as foreseen by paragraphs 9 and 11 of resolution 1572 (2004) and by resolution 1633 (2005). It recalls that those measures target individuals (a) blocking the implementation of the peace process, (b) held to be responsible for serious violations of human rights and international humanitarian law in Côte d'Ivoire, (c) inciting publicly hatred and violence, or any person or entity who is (d) determined to be in violation of the arms embargo. Charged, by virtue of its mandate, to evaluate, monitor and follow up closely the progress made, the Group is particularly resolved to help rapidly overcome any hindrance or slowdown affecting the process. It is ready to consider any attack or obstruction to the action of the United Nations, the impartial forces, the Security Council or the Group itself as demonstrating that those concerned oppose the process. The Group urges the Ivorian media to abstain from any publication, radio or television broadcasting which may undermine the peace and reconciliation process. It encourages the Prime Minister to take steps to improve the media environment as a matter of urgency. For all violations considered criminal offences, the possible implementation of targeted individual measures is without prejudice to the recourse to appropriate legal proceedings — Ivorian, foreign or international.

9. The Group notes that the day-to-day Mediation Group, co-chaired by South Africa and the Special Representative of the Secretary-General and comprising the High Representative of the United Nations for the elections as well as the representatives of the African Union and ECOWAS, has been meeting regularly and has been following up effectively the evolution of the peace process. It has noted with concern the manoeuvres and practices contrary to that process as well as the violations of human rights registered by the Mediation Group in its first report and invites it again to bring to the attention of the Group any obstacle to the peace process.

10. The Group has updated the road map towards organizing free, fair, open and transparent elections as soon as possible and no later than 31 October 2006. That road map is articulated around the following components: governance and political process, disarmament, demobilization and reinsertion of ex-combatants, disarming and dismantling militias, redeployment of the administration, identification and citizenship, electoral process, restoration of security with the support of the impartial forces, respect for human rights, sanctions and hindrances to freedom of movement, media follow-up and humanitarian action.

11. The Group has agreed to hold its next meeting in Côte d'Ivoire on 15 January 2006.